

(while Bill's cursed tongue is stilled)
an omen all right / says I

But Ruthie isn't listening
she is watching her nurse-neighbor come home from work
she straightens up / stops
her tears / sets her shoulders
"I've got to tell Polly" she says
and is gone
across the lawn

and I / watching her stride
cry / the first tide
since he died / an omen
a good omen / says I
(more tears still)

Ruthie

Ruthie

I

You were the bellows / for 5 yrs
you forced your life into him
you squeezed and squeezed / you
pumped and primed (a kind
of mouth to mouth resuscitation
of the spirit) you
jumped up and down / up
and down / up and
down on yourself / until
every muscle in your spirit ached
ached / ached

II

All that ache / to raise
a spark here / a bellow there
a poem / a glimpse
through the trees at the moon

at the moon / the muse / his muse
(he thought) the muse
he loved and you hated / the muse
that dry cold pale-faced bitch

Poem(s) for the Person Who Stole the Posters / and
Poems
Intended to Prick His Conscience / from
My Door

I Keep them / I'm glad
 a Normal someone / cares
 so much about poetry

 just one favor / please
 share them with others
 keep them in a conspicuous place
 and then / when

 they are stolen from you
 come talk to me about poems

II (until you do / I'll wonder
 whether you hate or love)

III You may have taste / but
 you ain't got much class

 the least you could do / is leave
 something in return

 even a packrat does that

IV We'll have to stop / not
 meeting like this / I mean
 what will the neighbors say?

Benjamin and the Officer

3 yrs after his conviction on the light charge
(the speeding was dismissed) again 3 AM
again the same scene
the same light / the same cop
(this time with glasses)
and Benjamin drives carefully / waits deliberately
till the light turns red
and then drives through / looking forward
to getting the cop in court
with his glasses on
to prove perjury